The Unitarian Christian

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A FERVENT UNITARIANISM!

(AN EDITORIAL)

Do we believe enough in Unitarian Christianity that we give it fervor and make serious sacrifices to promote it? Indifference, procrastinating and detouring have caused many religious liberals to turn aside from the heroic performance of propagating spiritual convictions and values. Unitarians need to augment the defense of the truth with fervent, vigorous and united service to their convictions. Right now, the exigencies of social misbehavior in our country and the world is a challenge to us to spread the gospel of liberal Christianity in a rational evangelism of Unitarianism.

Some may not approve of the term **evangelism** but, certainly, we cannot survive as a household of denominational faith if we lack the fervor of that spirit which the word connotes. This much is certain, Unitarianism in New England will not make an indelible imprint on contemporary life, will not grow and convince mankind, without a surging forth of a greater prophetic preaching and more animated leadership of clergy and laity. I contend —and the history of religions prove it—that merely to pronounce rational truth is not enough, for without a spiritually persuasive power undergirding that truth it will become static.

Convictions have power to regenerate the minds and hearts of men and bring moral and spiritual reformation in society only where there is a dogged determination to follow through those convictions into missionary action or social Christianity.

Concerted zeal coupled to a plan of propagation of faith is the modus operandi which will produce genuine church extension in Unitarianism. To revitalize men's faith we need more than philosophical contention, theological debate between right and left wings, and wrangling in technological cleavages of practical administration, which tend toward stagnation and regression. Modern Unitarian contribution to life must come out of a corporate body united to promote, above all private and petty interests, the distinctiveness of our broad faith. Thereby do we win strength in membership in our churches and service to our denominational enterprises.

If there is to be Unitarian advance in an age needing the free principles of religious faith we possess, then, Unitarian Christianity must have a voice—many voices! To extend our version of liberal Christianity we must assert ourselves with a powerful voice. First, this voice must speak in vigorous denial of the spirit of fatalism which is having ascendency in this hour of international crisis and national moral and spiritual disintegration. But, secondly, the voice must proclaim the Christian way. Our people need such a revival of faith and a sense of mission that they will be impelled to shout from the housetops that they **do not** concede that the basic teachings of Jesus constitute a lost cause and that

ristianity is to make its exit from affairs of this world.

Now we have an opportunity to e our light of optimistic, liberal th out from under the bushel and ce it on the stand. Believing that s ought to be done right now, w England Unitarians are doing at might well become a pattern other regions of the country ved by our churches. They are ding a Preaching Mission in Bos-, April 23, 24, 25, in the Arling- Street Church. The mission is ed on the theme: "Christianity r These Times." The Mission is d with the objective in mind that itarian Churches have much to e to put this groaning world back its religious feet. In three direct, ry and prophetic sermons Dr. eston Bradley will shout our faith m the housetop. The topics are erb: "What Is Unitarian Chris-nity?" "Youth, This Is Your ur" and "The Christian Answer World Catastrophe."

Why a Preaching Mission for **itarians?** Because we may say to rselves, "O, we of little faith!" may overcome fatal consequen- of our own weaknesses if we confess that we have not been faithful enough in our religious experience as individuals and a church. We have not been asserting our Christian potential powerfully enough. All too many of us have been **timid Unitarians,** sometimes apologetic Unitarians. We speak and live Unitarian Christianity but are shy about evangelizing the faith and strength of our religion. Collectively, we are not mobilizing and attacking the enemies of righteousness.

The success of the Preston Bradley Mission is assured by the great effort being given by the sponsors, ministers and lay people, in the churches of New England who are setting up local Preston Bradley Mission committees to get out the attendance at the meetings. Congregations will leave the Mission inspired to strengthen the programs of liberal Christianity in their churches and communities.

Plan to attend all three meetings. Bring friends and join the multitude in this new and great venture of spreading our cherished faith of Unitarianism.

HERE IS A RATIONAL EVANGELISM OF UNITARIANISM

HO is Preston Bradley?

Dr. Bradley is the pastor of the at Peoples Church of Chicago, ic hhe has served for 39 years. e morning service of his church s been broadcast every Sunday 27 years. He is one of the outnding civic leaders of Chicago l is in constant demand before portant groups and meetings. Dr. adley has a weekly television pro-m over WGN-TV and has the hest rating of any commentator any Chicago station. He has a nday night weekly broadcast on BBM, Chicago. His list of organi-ion affiliations is too long to men-n here. He is the author of six oks, two of which, "Courage for day" and "Mastering Fear" are best sellers. He has travelled extensively in Europe, Central and South America and spent the summer of 1950 in Europe, preaching in England, Ireland, Scotland, Holland and studying the conditions of the European countries. To hear Dr. Bradley is an unforgetable experience, an experience now open to you!

WHY is He Coming to Boston?

He comes to impress upon listeners in this area that Unitarian Christianity is not a stagnated, dead religion and that it has a distinctive, unique mission in this city and the world. As Dr. Frederick May Eliot, President of the American Unitarian Association, has stated it ably, the "clear, simple gospel of liberal Christianity will be set forth with

persuasive and compelling power; and every Unitarian within the reach of his voice will discover once again that his free faith is also a dynamic faith." He will convince us that we need not have a sheltered faith if we fight heroically for freedom through our liberal Christianity. Dr. Preston Bradley will guide our thinking and action in promoting ideal Christianity for these times.

WHAT is a Preaching Mission?

It is an opportunity, an opportunity to strengthen the spiritual well-being of Christians who have feeling for religion. A mission gathers congregations from many churches and heightens them to rededication to the mission of the church. It is directed to revitalize the spirit of Christianity in our churches and the communities they serve. A Unitarian preaching mission is different: there is no sawdust trail, no public testimonies and confessions, no question and answer period and none will be worked up into a frenzy. The Unitarian way of evangelizing its faith is by direct, fiery and prophetic preaching intellectually conceived and rationally proclaimed. Our Mission aims to provide a fervent Unitarian spirit for intellectual liberals who sense the need of reassurance, greater courage, renewed faith and who seek the "Christian Answer In A World of Catastrophe."

WHY Should I Attend?

The answer rings clear: because every Unitarian is a part of the ongoing process of Unitarian influence and propagation and believes enough in Unitarian Christianity to give collective action in full support. **This is your opportunity** to help to convey to all who listen and read during the week of April 23 that ours is a towering faith, supported by enthusiastic churchmen mobilized in great mass meetings as a demonstration that Unitarians are united, have a fervent spirit, possess numerical power and a plan for extending their faith. You are urged to participate in this great venture by attending the Preston Bradley Mission—and then say to others:

"I'm going! Come along with me!"

The Preston Bradley Mission of Unitarian Christianity

355 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

Honorary Chairman: Rev. Frederic May Eliot, D. D., President, American Unitarian Association. Honorary Vice Chairman: Rev. Charles E. Park, D. D., Rev. Henry Hallam Saunderson, D. D. General Chairman: Robert H. Loomis. Treasurer: Constant Wendell.

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Finance: Chairman, Constant Wendell, Albert G. Mason, Milton, Mass., Marshall I. Stone, Wm. Stanley Parker, Mrs. Wm. Stanley Parker.

ESSAY CONTEST

WHAT UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY MEANS TO ME

By
Carl E. Wennerstrom, age 24
First Unitarian Society of Chicago, Ill.

Winner of First Prize in Recent Essay Contest
For Unitarian Youth

Unitarian Christianity stands at e very center of my life. Within I find a sense of wholeness for it eaks to my condition in every pect of life as I know it. Nothing s ever done this for me before and is for that reason, perhaps, that give it such an ascendant position life. This is unique for my whole e has heretofore been oriented thin the orthodox framework. ver before have I had the awareess of an autonomy in this consumate sense. Never before have I felt ch a firm foundation for brotherod as I feel within Unitarian ristianity. And never before have known a religion which could most rve men as they yearn for charac-. I say these things for within is religious faith Jesus Christ and e best that has come from him is ed from the impediments, obructions, and strictures other faiths often place in his path. Here at t I can confront all of life with mplete and thoroughgoing honty, making no apologies whatsoer, and feel that I am a whole rson.

In the foregoing I have intimated at this relationship with Unitarn Christianity is recent. It is. I a first generation American. roughout the greater part of my e I was therefore under the aegis the old-world mind-set. As is ual with such youth I was adamt in my desire to modify the ther rigid socio-religious system of parents. I made a thrust for tonomy universal among all young ople. It was fortunate that this rust was not as irresistible as I d wanted it to be. I remained, erefore, within the church of my ther.

During the years of high school I was introduced to church work and took something of an active interest in the young peoples' group in the local church. In this group I was elected as a county representative to the governing body for a large metropolitan area. Here orthodoxy first confronted me in a vital manner. Here began my search for something more adequate. This quest isn't over and I trust it will continue. But within Unitarian Christianity I have found something which more than any other thing has given me a sense of progress and has enabled me to attain a personal integrity to a degree which I have never known before.

When I graduated from high school I was immediately called into service. In the Navy Chaplaincy I saw an area of service where I thought I could best integrate myself. I was refused that because the ranks were filled. Then came service as a radio technician. In that capacity aboard ship in the Pacific I served as what you might call an "enlisted" chaplain. There was a Roman Catholic priest aboard our ship and he was very cooperative in allowing me to conduct Protestant services Sunday mornings. During this naval service my religious possessions were modified, expanded, and crystallized. Discussions with both enlisted men and officers convinced me that if religious faith was to be adequate it had to be something like that which I have found in Unitarian Christianity. It had to be autonomous, it had to be a basis for brotherhood, and it had to be governed by the yearnings of men for character.

Unitarian Christianity does this as nothing else will, and until I have learned better this is where I stand. This religious faith approaches Jesus, the Christ, with more freedom allowed the person than pessimistic orthodoxy. It goes without saying that this freedom is not of the irresponsible sort so often criticized by non-Unitarian commentators. With such a figure as the unimpeded Jesus at the center of our faith we can minister to the needs of men no matter what their dilemma may be. We have no apology to make. Our whole integrity is engaged in interpreting Jesus' life as it is related to **our common life** today.

Brotherhood has nowhere else such an advocate as it has in the Unitarian Christian. He, the Unitarian Christian, brings to bear on the common problems of the human family the teachings of the greatest brother of all. It must be said here that Unitarian Christianity is not alone in this matter. The best faith, regardless of its name, will endeavor to this. What is maintained here, and what is unique here, is the fact that no other religious orientation can bring the Christ to bear on the great issues of our time with such consummate adequacy.

We have spoken of Unitarian Christianity as it relates to two of the large areas of life: Autonomy, personal and otherwise, and as a basis for brotherhood. It remains to mention how Unitarian Christianity fulfills for me my yearning for character.

I mentioned before the fact that I came from an orthodox religious orientation. Within that faith I was aware of a segmentalizing of character. Now there is a sense of unity, of wholeness. Then I was aware of a tendency to relate myself and my religion with weakness. Now I am able to bring into my religious faith the sure, strong, and steady knowledge that strength is a possession of mine and I am free to bring that to my faith too. Then I was never powerfully impressed with what was called "The Faith." Now I am encouraged with the creative might of belief. Then I was aware of a note of sadness and pessimism in religion. Now I feel a new capacity for happiness which can make life for me radiant, contagious, and inspiring.

Unitarian Christianity, then, fulfills my yearning for character. I can remember praying "Oh God give me purity (but not yet). Dedicate my life to noble issues (but not yet). Make me a devout disciple of the Christ (but not yet)." Now, with this new religious faith of mine, I can honestly dare lay hold upon the high heritage of Christ and pray for these things for myself and my fellows. Then I was aware of a fear for having hoped and prayed for things too great so that in their fulfillment I would have had cause to sacrifice. I trust that I can be wholly honest when I say that now, within Unitarian Christianity I have found the most vitally significant thing in life. For now I venture to free myself from such cowardice and timidity. Now I have a new degree of integrity.

Dinner in Honor

of

Dr. Preston Bradley

April 26 - 6 P. M.

Second Church in Boston

874 Beacon Street

$1.35 per Reservation

ESSAY CONTEST

WHAT THE UNITARIAN HERITAGE MEANS TO ME

By
Robert Clapp, Age 21
First Parish, Weston, Mass.
Winner of Second Prize

Having been reared by Unitarian arents, having been brought up in ie Unitarian denomination and at- nded Unitarian churches, I was rly indoctrinated into a heritage. his heritage was associated with aid New England, old family mes, lovely churches, sterling mmunion sets and famous people. have come to realize that this is t the Unitarian Christian heritage. o matter how much I like to bask its security, I can see that such heritage is merely sentimental and aterialistic. For it is not in these tward manifestations but rather the thoughts and actions of the n and women who used them, that find the essence of our faith and r true heritage.

Our heritage, then, lies in the alm of ideas and concepts. It's the sumption that rational man, ced upon earth to work out his n destiny, is entitled to use the sdom and knowledge of the ages fore him in achieving the pur- se of life as he interprets it. It mands first a condition of abso- e intellectual freedom, and second e belief that every individual has rth, dignity and the right to take responsibility for himself. Using se propositions as a basis from ich to work, a Unitarian finds at his heritage is the wisdom and owledge that spreads itself out fore man and what is commonly led Truth.

As one looks at the development religion down through the ages, sees man searching for a way attain real consciousness, an un- rstanding of the meaning and pur- se of his existence. Presumably re is an all knowing spiritual Be- which is this consciousness with ich we are to come in contact. Or least there is this position or state of consciousness which is the goal of all effort. Today most men are just wandering in a fog without concern for this Being or state of being. Religion should be a means or way or an encouragement to strive for this goal.

In my opinion there must be, therefore, some universal religion, some definite pattern that is slowly taking shape as man's mind itself develops. Now if a divine force is acting to lift us to it, it has been doing this ever since man was able to satisfy this power's demands. And we must study carefully the past in order to see in what way God has tried to guide men. On the other hand, with mankind staggering and reeling as it is, we must not look only to yesterday or the day before nor stab blindly into the future. As thinking human beings with our wits about us, we must profit from mistakes of former men and learn what man has taught and can teach us.

The Unitarian Christian heritage is thus a part of the larger inheritance. Assuming the prerequisites of intellectual freedom and the integrity of man, one looks at the life of Christ. Bearing in mind that there have been other great men, a Unitarian usually draws the conclusion that divinity expressed itself through Jesus like so many other men or that Jesus, a product of man, is also the example for man to imitate. Because America is part of that western civilization where Christianity predominates, it is only natural that Christ should be the dominant figure in our religion. Because we know him better — if we can know this controversial figure at all—our religious thinking centers around him, his life and his teachings. And so, if the Unitarian heri-

tage is universal religion, the Unitarian Christian heritage is Christ's contribution to universal religion.

Universal religion is made up of those sentiments which seem to be the essence of the essence of inspired men. Held up to the light these sentiments all seem the same to me. What I know about Ghandi, about Plato, and Schweitzer, what I know about Buddha and Socrates and Christ can be reduced to a common denominator. And in our Christian civilization today Christ is the most convenient and accessible numerator. Universal religion is the affirmation that goodness, beauty, justice, kindness, strength, honor, courage and self control are noble. It points up positive concepts. The significance of Jesus as I know him today, besides confirming these attitudes, is the idea that all men are equally significant and are consequently brothers. Christ's love to God is love of the attributes of universal religion and appreciation of the goal of transcendent consciousness.

The Unitarian Christian heritage is summed up in these ideas, freedom and individual integrity, universal religion, and the interpretation of Christ's life in accordance with the precepts. Beyond this point the Unitarian as an individual differs. I have purposely avoided my own sincere but as yet and perhaps forever immature convictions concerning the minute particulars of religion for it isn't on these particulars that we as a denomination find our unity. It is not in these minor interpretations governed so much by conditioning, the society into which we are projected, prejudice, ethnocentrism, and narrowness just as it is not in the material manifestations of churches, stained glass windows, famous names and tradition that we find our heritage. It is noble concepts, attitudes, ideas, and convictions that makes Unitarianism a truly meaningful religion.

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

The annual meeting of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship will be held on Monday, April 16 commencing with a supper meeting at 6.15 o'clock at the parish hall of the First Church in Boston, corner of Berkley and Marlboro Streets where the Rev. Grant Butler, Director of the Department of Extension, American Unitarian Association, will speak on the subject, "The Whys and Wherefores of Unitarian Church Extension."

Rev. Duncan Hewlett, minister of The First Church, will preside at the worship service. Mrs. William Stanley Parker, President of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship, will be in charge of the meeting. Reservations for dinner may be made through Constant Wendell, Treasurer, 102 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston. The charge is ninety-nine cents.

The following change in the by-laws has been proposed. Article XV. Fiscal Year; to read: The fiscal year of the Fellowship shall end on the first day of May.

The following officers for the fiscal year beginning April 1st, 1951 have been nominated by the Nominating Committee, consisting of Rev. Clayton B. Hale, Chairman, Albert Mason, Marshall Stone, Miss Sybil Holmes and Mrs. Herbert Lyman:

President, Mrs. William Stanley Parker.

1st Vice-President, Thomas F. Peterson.

2nd Vice-President, Mrs. Herbert Lyman.

Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Paul Harmon Chapman.

Recording Secretary, Rev. Carl Seaward.

Treasurer, Constant Wendell.

Clerk, Rev. Clayton B. Hale.

Director for three years, Walker Chamberlin, Esq., Mrs. Marshall Dalton.

WHAT THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN HERITAGE MEANS TO ME

By
David Arthur Pyle, Age 17
First Church of Plymouth, Mass.
Winner of Third Prize

Today I am a senior in high hool. Tomorrow I might be induct- into the armed forces. A year om now, I may be facing an en- y on a distant battlefield. What ture have I? What plans should make for tomorrow?

My future will be influenced by e preparation that I have received rough the home, school, and urch. My parents have provided with a pleasant home and the e comforts of life. Through the hool I have gained knowledge and derstanding. The church has set fore me many moral precepts that ave been free to think about and aluate. In modern battle the forces th the superior training and or- nization are usually victorious. natever lies ahead, the preparation ich I have received will give me nfidence to deal with the problems t will confront me.

My Unitarian religion requires re individual thought as regards ight and application than any hodox church in this modern rld. It is proper that churches uld be of varying beliefs so that y will be able more effectively to luence society. In this respect my rch has taught me to arrive at sonable conclusions through my n investigation. In fact the min- r has never pressed me to be- e in the Bible or even insisted t I attend church each Sunday. reover, my parents have inform- me about not only the Unitarian als but those of orthodox churches well. The choice of a religious up was left to my own judgment. As I grew older I commenced to rn more about the beliefs of the itarian church. Soon I discovered t the Unitarians had no generally epted creed. In fact members of congregation were encouraged to mold their attitudes toward God. However, their beliefs could be altered in accordance as the world changed, as when new scientific discoveries were made. In school many of my friends have talked to me about salvation. This concept is difficult for me to understand. From my own experience I know that famous men, now dead, like Thomas Jefferson and George Washington are remembered today. Americans never tire of repeating the wonderful achievements of these men over and over again, so that we can almost feel their living presence today. Moreover although we know that their physical life has come to an end, yet their good deeds which they have accomplished will never be forgotten. In this respect I feel that one of the most satisfying Unitarian beliefs is that it is important to put Heaven into Man rather than trying to put Man into Heaven!

I have heard that Man is a sinner and that he must forever repent throughout his life. However, I feel that if Man is encouraged to be good instead of feeling condemned, he will be more likely to lead a happy and more useful life on earth. In fact there is too much suffering in this world of ours; too many incurable diseases still taking a heavy toll of human lives. Therefore, while Man lives, he should be concerned with improving the welfare of others.

One of the ways in which the Unitarian religion is in tune with the modern world lies in the way in which it obtains its authority. Almost all Unitarians are inspired by the Bible, but they are not forced to accept it as the only authority. I regard the Bible as an early attempt of Man to understand religion, but I do not agree with any person who considers the Bible the only true

authority! Moreover, I would rather rely upon my experience and intelligence to guide me through life.

In Dr. Gilkey's sermon, "The Hand of the Lord," he compares the Hand of the Lord with the reflectors that appear along the side of the road and which have been placed there to assist the motorist in night driving. These glass reflectors, Mr. Gilkey states, guide the automobile around the curves through the darkness of night by picking up rays of light from the headlights of the car and transmitting this light into signals that outline the winding road. The knowledge that one derives from the interpretation of his own life experience is sufficient to illuminate the correct path to follow in daily life.

Moreover, the sociological record of the Unitarians is not to be overlooked. Great scientists, statesmen, and educators have been Unitarian. Joseph Priestly, the discoverer of Oxygen, was a Unitarian. Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, wrote:

"I trust that there is not a young man living in the United States who will not die a Unitarian." It is obvious that humanity has gained much from these men who believed in helping mankind to live supremely. Consequently, when people become devoted to helping one another, the world will then, and only then, be at peace!

In addition, the Unitarian liberal religion coincides closely with the democratic way of life. As democracy is the freest form of social life, so Unitarianism is the freest form of the religious life! For example, the Pilgrims of New Plymouth united themselves into a "civil body politic" when they found themselves outside the political control of the English government. Today Unitarianism is rapidly becoming a symbol of democracy.

It is becoming evident to me that the most important phase of my Unitarian Heritage has come through Christian fellowship. Moreover, I feel certain that the training in this fellowship will have a definite influence on my future. For example, the young people of my denomination meet Sunday evenings to plan the part they will take in the activities of the Club throughout the week. At these meetings we discuss some of the more pressing problems of the day. These debates usually take the form of panel discussions, and they are led by our members. A business meeting, recreation period, refreshments, and a candle-light service make these meetings an enjoyable and valuable experience in fellowship. Furthermore, once every month the group attends a conference meeting where groups are present from neighboring towns. The great advantage of these federation meetings lies in the great power of a united group! As a result a wider fellowship is gained. Further, once every year some of the most interested members of the Club are sent to conferences where they meet boys and girls from all over the state. These training sessions and workshops provide the delegates with a wider understanding of religion and give them an enriched experience in working with people. Moreover, valuable experience in leadership is gained.

My Unitarian Christian Heritage means to me the background of my preparation for life. Therefore, I feel that the spiritual training which brings me nearer to an understanding of the varied concepts of God, the ability to reach my own conclusions through free thought, the helping of unfortunate people through fellowship, along with my schooling and home training will adequately prepare me to face the hardships of life in the seemingly dark future ahead.

THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN is published monthly from October to May, by the Unitarian Christian Fellowship, (Mrs. William Stanley Parker, President; Rev. Paul Harmon Chapman, Corresponding Secretary.)

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Managing Editor, Rev. Heinz Rettig.
Editorial Secretary, Miss Margaret Rice.
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Articles for publication in this periodical are welcome for consideration from all who wish to use these columns to express Unitarian Christianity.

APPLICATION

Unitarian Christian Fellowship

102 MT. VERNON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

Purpose: To preserve and strengthen the Christian essence of Unitarianism.

I hereby subscribe to the purpose of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship as outlined above. Herewith is $.....in payment of membership for the current year, May 1st, 1951, through May 1st, 1952; this to include a yearly one dollar subscription, to the publication of the Fellowship.*

NAME .....

STREET .....

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*Regular membership $2.00.
Contributing membership $5.00 or more.

Hear PRESTON BRADLEY
"CHRISTIANITY FOR THESE TIMES"
ARLINGTON STREET CHURCH — BOSTON

The Gospel of Liberal Christianity in 3 Vigorous Sermons

Topics

April 23—"What is Unitarian Christianity?"

April 24—"Youth, This Is Your Hour!"

April 25—"The Christian Answer to World Catastrophe."

DR. PRESTON BRADLEY

"Five million listen to his program daily" (radio)—EVERYBODY'S DIGEST.
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HERE IS A RATIONAL EVANGELISM OF LIBERALISM

8.00 P. M. — DOORS OPEN AT 7.30 P. M.
"LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE MEN . . . ."